

wherein the first engagement member is an active engagement member that is movable, relative to the one of the sole of the snowboard boot or the binding to which the first engagement member is mounted, between a first state wherein the first engagement member does not engage the second engagement member and a second state wherein the first engagement member engages the second engagement member to prevent release of the toe area of the boot from the binding during riding, and

wherein the active engagement member is automatically movable, in response to the rider stepping out of the binding, from the second state to the first state.

49 45. (Amended) The snowboard boot of claim *33*, in combination with the *34* binding, wherein the pair of spaced apart engagement members is spaced apart by a distance, and wherein the wider base-end portion of the cleat is wider than the distance, and wherein the narrower free-end portion of the cleat is narrower than the distance.

C2 *56* 46. (Amended) The [snowboard boot] combination of claim *45*, wherein the pair *49* of spaced apart engagement members is spaced apart by a distance, wherein the cleat *49* further tapers along a length of the cleat from a wider toe-end portion of the cleat to a *49* narrower heel-end portion of the cleat, and wherein the wider toe-end portion of the cleat is wider than the distance and the narrower heel-end portion of the cleat is narrower than the distance.

C3 *51* 48. (Twice Amended) The snowboard boot of claim *33*, in combination with the *34* binding, wherein the pair of spaced apart engagement members is spaced apart by a distance, wherein the cleat further tapers along a length of the cleat from a wider toe-end portion of the cleat to a narrower heel-end portion of the cleat, and wherein the wider toe-end portion of the cleat is wider than the distance and the narrower heel-end portion of the cleat is narrower than the distance.

C4 51. (Three Times Amended) A snowboard boot adapted for use with a binding to mount the snowboard boot to a snowboard, the binding including a first engagement member, the snowboard boot comprising:

~~a sole; and~~

a second engagement member mounted to the sole to [releasably] engage the first engagement member;

wherein [one of] the [first and] second engagement member[s] is an active engagement member and [another of] the first [and second] engagement member[s] is a compatible engagement member that is engageable with the active engagement member, the active engagement member being movable, relative to the [one of the binding or the] sole [to which the active engagement member is mounted], from a first state wherein the active engagement member does not engage the compatible engagement member to a second state wherein the active engagement member engages the compatible engagement member to prevent release of the second engagement member from the first engagement member during riding; and

wherein the second engagement member automatically disengages from the first engagement member in response to the snowboard boot stepping out of engagement with the binding.

54. (Twice Amended) A non-releasable snowboard binding to mount a snowboard boot to a snowboard, the snowboard boot including a first engagement member, the snowboard binding comprising:

a base; and
a second engagement member, mounted to the base, that is adapted to mate with the first engagement member to [releasably] engage the snowboard boot to the binding, the second engagement member being an active engagement member that is movable relative to the base between a first state wherein the second engagement member does not engage the first engagement member and a second state wherein the second engagement member engages the ~~first~~ engagement member to prevent release of the boot from the binding during riding, and wherein the active engagement member is automatically movable, in response to the snowboard boot stepping out of the binding, from the second state to the first state.

55. (Amended) The snowboard binding of claim 54, wherein the active engagement member is further automatically movable, in response to the rider stepping into the binding, from the first state to the second state, [wherein the first engagement member includes a cleat having a base mounted to a sole of the snowboard boot and medial and lateral sides, and] wherein the second engagement member includes a pair of spaced apart engagement members each adapted to engage one of [the] a medial and lateral side[s] of the *first engagement member* ⁵⁸ _{second}

61. (Amended) The snowboard binding of claim 55, wherein the second engagement member further includes at least one stop adapted to inhibit migration of the [cleat] *first engagement member* when engaged with the pair of spaced apart engagement members.

64. (Amended) The snowboard binding of claim 55, in combination with the binding, wherein the first engagement member includes a cleat having a base mounted to a sole of the snowboard boot and medial and lateral sides, and wherein the cleat has a wider base-end portion and a narrower free-end portion, and wherein the pair of spaced apart engagement members is spaced apart by a distance that is greater than the narrower free-end portion of the cleat and smaller than the wider base-end portion of the cleat.

65. (Amended) The [snowboard binding] combination of claim 64, wherein each of the medial and lateral sides of the cleat further tapers along a length of the cleat from a wider toe-end portion of the cleat to a narrower heel-end portion of the cleat, and wherein the pair of spaced apart engagement members is spaced apart by a distance that is greater than the narrower heel-end portion of the cleat and smaller than the wider toe-end portion of the cleat.

69. (Amended) The [snowboard binding] combination of claim 64, wherein each of the pair of spaced apart engagement members is loop-shaped.

72 71. (Amended) The [snowboard binding] combination of claim 69, wherein at least one of the pair of spaced apart engagement members is biased for movement toward the other.

69 71. (Amended) The [snowboard binding] combination of claim 65, wherein each of the pair of spaced apart engagement members is loop-shaped.

70 69 72. (Amended) The [snowboard binding] combination of claim 71, wherein at least one of the pair of spaced apart engagement members is biased for movement toward the other.

73. (Twice Amended) A [snowboard binding to mount a snowboard boot] system for mounting a rider to a snowboard, the [snowboard boot including a first engagement member, the snowboard binding] system comprising:

a snowboard boot including a first engagement member; and

a snowboard binding comprising;

a base; and

a second engagement member, mounted to the base, that is adapted to mate with the first engagement member to releasably engage the snowboard boot to the binding, the second engagement member being an active engagement member that is movable relative to the base between a first state wherein the second engagement member does not engage the first engagement member and a second state wherein the second engagement member engages the first engagement member to inhibit lifting of the boot from the binding during riding, and wherein the active engagement member is automatically movable, in response to the rider stepping out of the binding, from the second state to the first state; wherein the active engagement member is further automatically movable, in response to the rider stepping into the binding, from the first state to the second state, wherein the first engagement member includes a cleat having a base mounted to a sole of the snowboard boot and medial and lateral sides, and wherein the second engagement